

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ELEVEN SELECTED READING  
SKILL-TEXTS USED TO AID IN THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF READING COMPREHENSION IN A COLLEGE  
READING PROGRAM

A THESIS  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Rationale

Through the ages reading has undergone many harsh, and perhaps justifiable, criticisms from teachers and from educators. With these criticisms have come changes in methods, materials, and theories of teaching reading. From 1607 to 1776 undue stress was placed upon the alphabet and upon the spelling methods of teaching reading. The Revolutionary Period through the middle 19th century experienced an over-emphasis on oral reading. The period between 1859 and 1880 emphasized the word method. From 1919 extending through the middle thirties was the period of undue stress on silent reading.<sup>1</sup>

From 1940 to 1950 there was increased attention to teaching reading at the higher levels, reading in the content fields, reading and mass communication, and the relationship between reading and handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, and composition. From 1950 to 1960 adult reading deficiencies and television, as related to reading, came

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<sup>1</sup>The Reading Center, "Background Syllabus for Basic Course in the Teaching of Reading," Atlanta University, p. 7. (Mimeographed.)

into focus. Perhaps most important is the fact that there were attempts to delve more deeply into the reading process and to define more broadly the factors that affect it.<sup>1</sup>

Reading as a universal concern has been recognized since the second world war. It has been discovered that reading difficulties exist, not only on the elementary school level, but on the college and university levels as well. Many college educators attribute this to the poor preparation received by students in high school. To some extent this is true; however, college educators are now becoming aware of the fact that reading consists of a sequential development of skills which continues through the college and the university levels. Many of the reading skills and habits which were effective for high school success are inadequate for the reading demands made on the college level.

Each year the colleges are overcrowded with incoming freshmen. Many of these students are potential drop-outs. Their failure to make satisfactory adjustment to college can be attributed to many factors, ranking high among them are reading deficiencies. Among the difficulties experienced by most freshmen entering college are: inability to concentrate upon reading activity; inability to evaluate critically a writer's bias and use of preconceived

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<sup>1</sup> Albert J. Harris, Readings on Reading Instruction (New York: David McKay Co., 1963), pp. 9-15.



ideas; inadequate study skills; and inadequate speeds of comprehension for college level materials.

Recently, these recognized needs for training in college level reading are being dealt with by college educators as is evidenced by an increasing number of college reading programs coming into view. In an attempt to deal effectively with reading problems at this level one of several types of organizational structures may be used to suit the needs of the particular locale. One type of organizational structure is that of the separate or special services. In this type of organization, the objectives and practices are determined by the reading staff. In another structure, reading is combined with the language arts. In this type of organization, instruction for reading improvement may consist of a unit on reading. A third type of organization is supported by the fact that reading abilities and demands vary in different content fields. Becoming more prevalent are the pre-college summer programs in which incoming freshmen enroll in reading courses designed to improve specific skills which will promote success in dealing more effectively with college reading demands.

Procedures and materials for these programs may be classified into three major types: mechanical-aid oriented, textbook oriented, or counseling oriented. The mechanical-aid orientation utilizes various types of mechanical devices for instruction. These aids may include films and

filmstrips, auditory materials to be used with the tape recorder, records and record players. Included also would be devices for the development of rates of comprehension such as the controlled reader, reading accelerators, perceptamatics, tachistoscopes, and skimmers.<sup>1</sup>

The textbook-oriented program employs reading manuals or student textbooks. Under this type program the students' regular textbooks may be used, especially if they are integrated with content courses. In the counseling-oriented program, attention is given to emotional factors as they relate to reading difficulties.

The most popular plan of instruction is the textbook-oriented program supplemented by mechanical aids. Until the present time, there has been no single acceptable textbook. Most of the manuals and textbooks in reading differ as to purpose, design, emphasis, use, and readability. Manuals and textbooks should be selected so as to secure a variety of instructional material to match the range and complexity of the reading process.

Since 1946 materials are being published in greater quantities for reading instruction. It is now found that there are ample aids to the development of word recognition, vocabulary, various comprehension skills, work-study skills,

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<sup>1</sup>Ruth Strang, Constance McCullough, and Arthur E. Traxler, The Improvement of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1961), p. 55.

and flexible rates. While most of these materials are good, a single text is not strong in all of the skills areas. This fact necessitates the selection of a variety of materials to suit the objective of the reading programs.

### Evolution of the Problem

This problem grew out of the writer's experiences in working as a graduate reading assistant in the Morris Brown College reading program. As a reading assistant, she observed the reading teacher in the classroom setting and taught basic units under the supervision of the reading teacher. She gained insight into the nature of comprehension through supervising reading laboratory classes, studying results from standardized tests, and reviewing and selecting materials to be used for teaching units and for laboratory classes.

This writer's interest in the subject of comprehension in general developed during class lectures and discussions. Her interest was extended during her reading of the professional literature in the field. At the Annual Conference on Reading held at the Atlanta University Reading Center, April 1965, discussions with the reading consultants concerning comprehension served to heighten this interest. Because the writer had to become familiar with a bulk of reading material for the development of comprehension, she became interested in the general subject.

Specifically, this problem evolved because of the writer's interest in the development of comprehension and because of her previous experiences of working with materials designed to develop comprehension abilities. Because of this interest and previous background, she was interested in doing a more extensive study which would permit her to make a more discriminating appraisal of some selected reading skill-texts.

#### Contribution to Educational Research

It is hoped that research into this problem would reveal similarities or dissimilarities within the selected reading skill-texts, according to stated criteria, which would aid teachers and department heads in selecting and using reading skill-texts designed to meet the needs of freshmen enrolled in college reading programs similar to the one under consideration.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study involved a content analysis of eleven selected reading skill-texts used to aid in the development of general comprehension abilities in the freshman reading program at Morris Brown College.

#### Statement of the Purposes

The purposes of this study were:

1. To describe the physical characteristics of the selected reading skill-texts including format,

legibility, and special external features according to stated criteria.

2. To describe the content of the selected reading skill-texts according to organization and variety of topics covered, with particular reference to the goals of the Morris Brown College reading program.
3. To determine the difficulty of the reading selections within the selected reading skill-texts according to the Dale-Chall readability formula.
4. To discover if the direct or indirect approach of developing comprehension skills is used in the selected reading skill-texts and to classify them accordingly.
5. To draw implications which may be of value to the reading program.

#### Definition of Terms

The significant terms to be used in this study are defined as follows:

1. "Content Analysis" - a research technique used for both the subjective qualitative appraisal and the objective systematic, quantitative description of communication content.<sup>1</sup>
2. "Skill-text" - a special kind of textbook to be used by students in reading courses, designed for the development or improvement of reading skills.
3. "Direct Approach" - a type of comprehension check in which the comprehension questions are so framed that students are asked to respond directly to a given skill or skills.
4. "Indirect Approach" - a type of comprehension check in which the comprehension questions are

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (Chicago: The Free Press Publishers, 1952), p. 18.

so framed as to check various comprehension skills without referring directly to the skill itself.

5. "General Comprehension" -a blanket term applied to various types of meaning-getting skills which cover a whole area of thought-getting processes in reading. These processes include the following:

Literal Comprehension--"the skill of getting the primary, direct, 'literal' meaning of a word, idea, or sentence in context."<sup>1</sup>

Interpretation--interpretation in reading material ". . . has been used to include those skills necessary in getting deeper meanings in addition to those obtained by simple literal comprehension."<sup>2</sup>

Critical Reading--". . ., critical reading includes literal comprehension and interpretation . . ., but it goes further than either of these in that the reader evaluates, that is, passes personal judgment on the quality, the value, the accuracy, and the truthfulness of what is read."<sup>3</sup>

Specific Word Meanings--involve, "working with specific word meanings, abstractions, meanings of variant word forms, synonyms, antonyms, similies, and metaphorical language."<sup>4</sup>

Rate of Comprehension--the number of words per minute with acceptable understanding.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to a selection of eleven reading skill-texts chosen on the basis of the recommendations of the second-year graduate reading assistants in the

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<sup>1</sup>Nila Banton Smith, Reading Instruction for Today's Children (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Atlanta University Center Reading program. This study was further limited to an investigation of only those selections within the selected reading skill-texts which dealt with general comprehension.

### Locale and Period of the Study

This study was done within the Atlanta University Center and the Public Library in the city of Atlanta.

The study was done in connection with the Morris Brown College reading program which was serving approximately 350 freshmen showing deficiencies in some area of reading. Group instruction undergirded the reading program with an effort to meet the needs of the students on an individual basis by varying the materials to suit the needs of the several students. Morning and afternoon clinics were provided so as to permit opportunity for highly individualized instruction.

The activities involved in collecting, assembling, and treatment of the data, and the writing of the research report were performed during the second semester and the summer of the 1965-66 school year and the summer, 1968.

### Description of the Materials

The materials used for this study were eleven selected reading skill-texts used for the development of general comprehension abilities in the freshman reading program at Morris Brown College. The selected skill-texts

included the following:

Brown, James I., Efficient Reading

James I. Brown of the University of Minnesota has written the book Efficient Reading to be used for the development of reading efficiency on the college level and beyond the college level. His book is organized around two major sections: how to communicate and what to communicate.

Gilbert, Doris Wilcox, Breaking the Reading Barrier

Doris Wilcox Gilbert is the head of the university extension reading improvement program at the University of California. Her book, Breaking the Reading Barrier is designed for use in reading classes and clinics in special freshman groups and adult education centers. It was written for readers competent with simple, familiar materials but who lacked independence with more difficult passages.

Glock, Marvin D., The Improvement of College Reading

Marvin D. Glock of Cornell University has written the book, The Improvement of College Reading to be used in reading improvement classes. Because of the author's scientific understandings as a background, he has selected a large number of excerpts for practice reading and devised some ingenious exercises to accompany these passages which emphasize and teach various characteristics of good reading.



Hill, Walter and Eller, William, Power in Reading Skills

Walter Hill is the director of Reading-Study Laboratory at the University of Oregon. William Eller is the director of the Reading Center at State University of New York at Buffalo. Their book, Power in Reading Skills, was written to provide a comprehensive source of learning-practice materials in advanced reading skills which form the basis for powerful reading.

Sherbourne, Julia Florence, Toward Reading Comprehension

Julia Florence Sherbourne, of the University of Arkansas planned that the book, Toward Reading Comprehension would fit into the college curriculum in two ways: to be used as a corrective for students whose weaknesses in reading have already been noted and to be used as a developmental text by freshman English instructors who wish their students to know more about basic reading skills and how to develop them.

Smith, Nila Banton, Be a Better Reader, Books I, II, III, IV, V, and VI

Nila Banton Smith is a Professor of Education at New York University. In addition to her Be a Better Reader book series, she has published Reading Instruction for Today's Children, Challenges in Reading, Voyages in Reading, and Graded Selections for Informal Reading Diagnosis. The Be a Better Reader book series is designed to improve the

basic common skills needed in reading all types of material and to develop special skills needed for effective reading in the areas of science, social studies, mathematics, and literature.

### Method of Research

The Descriptive-Survey Method of research, employing the specific technique of content analysis of the selected skill-texts was used to accomplish the purposes of this study.

### Procedural Steps

1. Copies of the eleven selected reading skill-texts were secured.
2. Literature pertinent to this study was reviewed and summarized.
3. The physical characteristics of the selected skill-texts including length of line, size of type, adequacy of leading, and length of paragraphs were described according to criteria stated for acceptable readability as reported by George D. Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers.
4. The content of the selected skill-texts was described according to organization and variety of topics covered.
5. The skill-texts were described in terms of methods of checking comprehension skills, direct or indirect.
6. The Dale-Chall readability formula was applied to discover the difficulty of the reading selections.
7. The data were organized and classified.
8. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

### Survey of Related Literature

The literature pertinent to this study was reviewed by the writer. The significant aspects of this literature as it relates to the nature of comprehension, the technique of content analysis, and research involving similar subjects, both published and unpublished are reviewed in the following paragraphs.

#### Nature of comprehension

One of the earliest efforts to discover the process involved in comprehension was done by Thorndike in 1917. On the basis of detailed study of children's errors in sentence and paragraph reading, he concluded that comprehension of what is read involves the same kind of organization and analytic action of ideas as that which occurs in higher level thinking. Judd and Buswell did a study of different types of silent reading. They concluded, on the basis of eye movement records, that the mental processes involved in reading vary with the kind of material read. Hillard, in a study to identify factors which exert most influence on comprehension, reported that intelligence and reading meaning vocabulary are more closely related to comprehension than any of the other factors studied.<sup>1</sup>

Smith says that the term "comprehension" entered our professional reading vocabulary in the early twenties'

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<sup>1</sup>Strang, McCullough, and Traxler, op. cit., p. 55.

when it was introduced to label the process by which meanings were abstracted from printed symbols. The term itself has persisted through the years and has been used to cover an entire area of specific processes necessary in fully understanding the import of reading text.<sup>1</sup>

Spache gives his view of what comprehension is when he says that "comprehension is dependent upon the ideas the reader brings to his reading--his experiences, his reading background, his learning." He states further that comprehension is more than the ability to understand the ideas which are conveyed by the printed word because these ideas must be meaningful to the reader and integrated with the reader's concepts.<sup>2</sup>

Another view of what comprehension is can be gotten from attempts to explain factors which cause variations in comprehension abilities as measured by tests. Many of these investigations stress the influence of general intelligence upon comprehension.<sup>3</sup> However, Karlin reports that: although intelligence influences comprehension to some extent; background experiences, feelings, and values are factors

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<sup>1</sup>Nila Banton Smith, "Critical Reading," Elementary English, XL (April, 1963), 409-10.

<sup>2</sup>George D. Spache, Toward Better Reading (Champaign, Illinois: Garrard Publishing Co., 1963), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

that have greater influence.<sup>1</sup>

Three other sources to which we may turn to in seeking answers to the question: What is comprehension? are: reasoned analyses of experts, experimental research, and statistical analysis.

Some reasoned analyses experts, Gates, DeBoer, Traxler and Guilford, list several mental processes involved in comprehension. On this list we find: thinking, reflecting, reasoning, capacity for suspended judgment, interpretation of the writer's motives, clarification of meanings, discovery and recognition of information, and productive thinking.<sup>2</sup>

Experimental researchers singled out a number of abilities involved in comprehension. These abilities included all types of thinking and problem-solving, main idea, details, sequence, creative reading, ability to make inferences, identifying generalizations, applying information derived to problematic situation, sensing relationships among ideas, determining the relevancy of ideas, distinguishing the critical theme of a selection, and sensing semantic variations among words.<sup>3</sup>

Statistical analysis done by Thorndike, Holmes, and

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<sup>1</sup>Karlin, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, Reading Instruction, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Burkart revealed the following about comprehension:

Thorndike, in his investigation, concluded that reading is thinking. Holmes developed the "sub-strata factor theory" through the use of factorial analysis of an orderly arrangement of casual factors in speed and power reading.

Burkart's statistical analysis revealed two hundred and fourteen reading skills. Her list includes many items which are not thinking skills per se.<sup>1</sup>

Since comprehension has come to include so many skills it is necessary to categorize these skills and set up some type of hierarchy of skills to be developed. Letton<sup>2</sup> estimates the relative difficulty of the various types of facts and suggests that five levels or concepts may be distinguished. These levels are as follows:

1. Factual--recall or recognition of stated details, finding specific details.
2. Reorganization--reorganizing or stating the main idea, summarizing the central thought, outlining the given facts, classifying ideas.
3. Inferential--anticipating outcomes, drawing conclusions or inferences, recognizing sequence of related ideas, recognizing implied details, perceiving relationships.
4. Interpretative--recognizing and interpreting figurative language, recognizing connotations and denotations of words, following sensory impressions, interpreting idiomatic language, reacting to tone or mood.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Spache, op. cit., p. 77.

5. Evaluative--comparing and contrasting concepts with own experience and various sources, distinguishing between fact and opinion, eliciting generalizations, making judgments about author's purpose and veracity, recognizing propaganda techniques, reacting to author's style.

Smith has broken down the general term comprehension into three categories representing different types of thought getting processes. She has designated these categories as literal comprehension, interpretation and critical reading.

According to Smith,<sup>1</sup> literal comprehension represents that level of skill in which the primary concern is that of getting the primary meaning conveyed by the exact words, sentences, or paragraphs in the text. The interpretation level includes those skills necessary in getting deeper meanings than those that can be obtained through literal comprehension. Those deeper-meaning skills embrace mental activities involved in supplying or anticipating meanings not stated directly in the text, such as: drawing inferences, making generalizations, sensing cause and effect, speculating on what happened between events, anticipating what will happen next, making comparisons, identifying the nature of characters, et cetera.

Karlin<sup>2</sup> says that the term critical reading is synonymous with critical thinking with the difference being

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, "Critical Reading," 409-10

<sup>2</sup>Karlin, op. cit., p. 8.

that the printed word rather than the spoken word serves as the intervening variable. He concludes, then, that critical reading is the process of examining (materials) in the light of related objective evidence, comparing. . . the statement with some norm or standard and concluding or acting upon judgment made.

### The technique of content analysis

Content analysis is a technique which has been used more and more frequently. Some of its many uses have been to describe trends in communication content, to compare media or "levels" of communication, as an aid in technical research operations, to measure the "readability" of communication materials, to discover stylistic features, et cetera.<sup>1</sup>

According to Berelson, content analysis was not used extensively in its early history. However, the output of content analysis studies revealed that there has been a sharp increase in five year intervals in the application of the technique.<sup>2</sup>

In its early application, up to the 1930's, the technique was used by students of journalism and by sociologists. However, in the late 1930's the technique became more extensively used by Harold D. Lassawell and his

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<sup>1</sup>Berelson, op. cit., pp. 29-65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-4.



associates; this contributed significantly to the stimulus given it by expanding its usage. During the second world war, the technique was used by departments of the United States Government. It came into commercial use when Towhey applied it to discover the treatment given various topics and events in a sample of the nation's press. Commercial application of the technique was sponsored later by Fortune Magazine and General Motors Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

Included among the users of the technique are educators. Their interest began with the analysis of school books and children's literature and expanded to the analysis of content communication for adults. The first studies dealt with, in the mid-1920's, were readability studies which classified materials into "easy" or "hard" categories. Later studies by Gray and Leary followed in 1935 investigated 82 assumed difficult elements in written material, of which five were selected as best correlating with comprehension tests. Growing out of this study was the Lorge Formula, 1944.<sup>2</sup>

The Lorge formula was one of the first easy-to-apply readability formulas but this formula is inadequate for materials above the eighth grade level. Rudolph Flesch produced his readability formula which was supposed to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-24.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

overcome the shortcomings of Lorge's formula. Mr. Flesch used three factors in his formula: average sentence length, relative number of affixed morphemes (prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings), and relative number of personal references. On the whole, this formula was found to be adequate with its most serious shortcomings being the arbitrary count of affixes, thus permitting two people making a count on the same sample to come out with a different number of affixes.<sup>1</sup>

The formula developed by Dale and Chall is a simple two-factor formula that is easy to apply. It uses a factor of vocabulary load (relative number of words outside the Dale list of 3,000 words) and a factor of sentence structure (average sentence length). The corrected grade levels helped interpret the scores obtained by the formula and give a more usable means of placing materials within the comprehension of the various grades.<sup>2</sup>

Readability formulas are valid and justified for specific purposes. They do not indicate the exact degree of difficulty for all readers but they do arrange materials in order of their difficulty for the reader. The formulas indicate the average reading ability need for adequate

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," Reprinted from the Educational Research Bulletin, XXVII (January 21 and February 17, 1948), Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, 11-21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

comprehension of certain books. They do not attempt to prove that all readers of this level of ability will necessarily enjoy the book or be able to read it with profit. The formulas are not intended to take the place of competent judgment on the part of educators.<sup>1</sup>

### Research involving similar subjects

Research involving similar subjects are numerous. Many of these researches utilize different tools. Some of the pertinent investigations, published and unpublished, are summarized and reported in the following paragraphs.

#### Published research

Published research utilizing the technique of content analysis and the application of readability formulas have increased significantly since 1940. Included among these publications are investigations by Porch, Tubbs, and Anderson. Porch applied the Lorge Formula of Readability to social studies textbooks. Tubbs used both the Dale-Chall and the Flesh Formulas in his investigation of thirty geography textbooks to ascertain the readability levels.<sup>2</sup>

Jones and Van Why investigated the SRA Reading

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<sup>1</sup>George D. Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers (Campaign, Illinois: Garrard Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 26-27.

<sup>2</sup>Wilbur R. Miller, "Readability Versus Reading Ability," The Journal of Educational Research, LVI, No. 4 (December, 1962), 204.

Laboratory, a set of multi-level reading materials designed to provide for a wide range of reading abilities. This investigation was done to discover the effectiveness of this laboratory in increasing significantly reading achievement. It was discovered that this laboratory is effective in promoting growth in reading achievement both in vocabulary and in comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

Dimitroff did a quantitative-qualitative analysis of social science textbooks widely used in large city school systems. She concluded in her study that the quantity of the generalizations expressed in the textbooks was inadequate when compared with the Canadian-United States Textbook Study.<sup>2</sup>

In an attempt to find the degree of compatability between readability of general shop textbooks and the reading ability of ninth grade industrial arts students, Miller conducted a study in which he rated the readability levels of selected general shop textbooks and related them to the reading abilities of a selected group of ninth grade students.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Reginald L. Jones and Earl Van Why, "The SRA Reading Laboratory and Fourth Grade Pupils," Journal of Developmental Reading, V, No. 1 (Autumn, 1961), 45-46.

<sup>2</sup>Lillian Dimitroff, "A Quantitative-Qualitative Analysis of Selected Social Studies Generalizations in Social Studies Textbooks in the Intermediate Grades," The Journal of Educational Research, LV, No. 3 (November, 1961), 135.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, op. cit., pp. 205-6.

Blue did a study to determine if readability factors such as style of writing, author's definition, and sentence length influenced significantly seventh grade pupils' comprehension of science materials. According to this report, factors of readability had little influence on science reading comprehension.<sup>1</sup>

#### Unpublished research

Williams was able to gather valuable information concerning appealing elements in five short stories and to ascertain the elements within the stories themselves which held highest appeal.<sup>2</sup>

Nwokorie used the technique of content analysis to analyze Georgia public school textbooks. He obtained information on the manner in which authors and publishers treated the African and African countries in these textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

#### A content analysis of a twelfth grade literature

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<sup>1</sup>Larry Lamar Blue, "A Study of the Influences of Certain Factors in Science Materials on Reading Comprehension of Seventh Grade Pupils," Dissertation Abstracts, XXV, No. 10 (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Cushing Malloy, Inc., April, 1965), p. 5625.

<sup>2</sup>Billie Jewel Suber Williams, "Content Analysis of Five Short Stories Preferred by a Group of College Freshmen" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of English, Atlanta University, 1961).

<sup>3</sup>Sunday I. Nwokorie, "Treatment of Africa and the Africans in Georgia Public School Textbooks" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1962).

anthology was done in 1962 by Smith. In her study she was concerned with the features of special appeal to high school students.<sup>1</sup>

Jones did a content analysis of seven educational and instructional television books to discover the inclusiveness of concepts presented. He found that guide books in television carried quite similar information as those books geared to classroom teaching.<sup>2</sup>

In a content analysis of fifth grade social studies textbooks, Haynes' research reveals valuable information for persons concerned with selecting basic and supplementary books in that it reveals the degree of emphasis placed on social studies concepts in twenty-one social studies textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

Mullins analyzed six high school chemistry textbooks. She rated the coverage of fifty valuable content units found in these chemistry textbooks.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jean Blackshear Smith, "Content Analysis of Twelfth Grade Literature Anthology" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of English, Atlanta University, 1962).

<sup>2</sup>Alphonso G. Jones, Jr., "A Content Analysis of Seven Educational and Instructional Television Books" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>Maurice W. Haynes, "A Content Analysis of Fifth Grade Social Studies Textbooks" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1965).

<sup>4</sup>Betty S. Mullins, "A Content Analysis of Six High School Chemistry Textbooks" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1965).

Jacobs did a study of The G.T.E.A. Herald, The G.E. Journal, and The N.E.A. Journal for the periods of 1957 through 1961 utilizing the technique of content analysis. She analyzed and compared the range, variety, and quality of the subjects treated in an attempt to discover inadequacies with reference to the fulfillment of the professional interests and needs of Negro education personnel in Georgia. She found that there was little planning and inadequate experience in journalism among the editorial committee. She found also that the subject content was narrow and that there was overlapping of regular articles and special feature articles.<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary of related literature

Comprehension is a broad term which encompasses a large number of sub-skills. There are several views of what comprehension is, however, most authorities agree that it is closely related to the ability to think. In an attempt to explain the nature of comprehension we have come up with the views of reasoned analyses of experts, experimental research, and statistical analyses. Both Letton and Smith break the skills defined by these experts down into hierarchies or levels.

The technique of content analysis is growing in

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<sup>1</sup>Margaret A. Jacobs, "A Content Analysis of Three Educational Journals" (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Education, Atlanta University, 1965).

usage, with it we find increasing application of readability formulas. Research has proven that readability formulas are valid and justified for specific purposes and that they are not intended to take the place of competent judgment on the part of educators.

In view of this summary of the literature, research into the skill-texts selected by the writer seems desirable.



## CHAPTER II

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Foreword

This research was done to obtain requisite data from which implications could be drawn to aid in the selection and utilization of reading skill-texts used in college reading programs. This requisite data were obtained by analyzing eleven selected reading skill-texts used in the college reading program at Morris Brown College.

The organization, presentation, and analysis of the data pertinent to this research have been organized as follows: (a) the introduction which presents the overall frame of reference for the study; (b) the procedural steps in securing the data; (c) the identification of the materials; (d) the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data derived from the study; and, (e) implications that may be of value to a reading program.

#### Introduction

Fortunately, in the past ten to twenty years, elementary schools, high schools and colleges have received larger budgetary allowances for the purchasing of books. The trend is for these institutions to purchase increasing

numbers of books in an attempt to get a wide variety of reading materials. As a result, many school libraries and reading laboratories have a numerous supply or quantity of books and a great many more of these materials are being published every day.

Contemporary educators are concerned not only with the availability of such materials, which are being published in increasing numbers, but also with the content of these materials. That is, specifically, does the book truly reach the minimum standards in terms of physical characteristics, content, readability and other factors required by educators.

Publishers assert many claims for these materials; in fact, it is becoming increasingly difficult to discover a single publication which does not claim to be the panacea for all reading problems. Many of these claims are, in fact, true. However, in some cases, an examination or analysis of the content of some of these materials reveals limitations not henceforth claimed by the publishers.

In order that the writer might discover the strengths, and perhaps limitations, of the eleven selected reading skill-texts used in this study, she set up five purposes. These purposes and their significance are described in the paragraphs which follow.

The first purpose was to describe the physical characteristics of the selected reading skill-texts

including format, legibility, and special external features according to stated criteria. The physical characteristics or typography of books do influence the ease by which one may read the book. Typography has been studied intensively and considerable information about the effects of length of lines, margins, leading and typeface has been gathered. Experimentation done by Miles A. Tinker and Donald G.

Patterson as presented by Spache<sup>1</sup> reveals the following:

1. In normal reading situations variations in type face are of little significance since reading occurs by word shapes and other cues rather than letters; therefore, common type faces have little effect upon ease of readability.
2. The length of line does influence reading rates; too short or too long lines hinder speed. Approximately 80 millimeters or three and one-fourth inches is considered the most suitable length.
3. Two column arrangements, with adequate spacing between columns is preferable to a single wide column.
4. Unusually large or small sizes of type seem to have some definite effect upon reading efficiency when compared with ten points as standard. Type sizes between the limits of nine and twelve points can be read equally fast.
5. Leading or spacing between lines is important to legibility and reading speed. Current practice is to give one or two points leading between lines for type between nine and twelve points.
6. Approximately 50 per cent of the page should be devoted to margins with adequate inner margins to allow for the curvature of the bound page.

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<sup>1</sup>Spache, Good Reading, pp. 12-13.

7. Short paragraphs promote legibility and readability, particularly if they correspond to thought units.
8. Slight variations in the color or surface of the printing stock do not seem to affect speed of reading. Glossy, dull coated or antique papers yield similar results in reading speed; however, glossy paper may produce glare or too much reflection of light. Off-white color is considered best for reading ease.

The second purpose was to describe the content of the selected reading skill-texts according to organization and variety of topics covered, with particular reference to the goals of the Morris Brown College reading program. The organization of the reading skill-texts is important in terms of the procedure of presentation of reading selections or lessons. If the reading skill-texts are effective in promoting the purposes for which they were designed, the improvement or development of comprehension skills, they must be structured toward some definite objective. This objective or purpose must be made clear to the user of the skill-texts. In determining the adequacy of the organization of the selected reading skill-texts, the writer used the following standards for analysis:

1. The presentation of a purpose before the reading selections.
2. The presentation of the comprehension check immediately following the reading selection rather than locating it in the appendix or in a separate comprehension booklet.
3. The availability of answer keys for comprehension checks, that is, if they were located

within the skill-text itself or in a separate key booklet or teacher's manual.

The writer felt that an analysis of the selected reading skill-texts for variety, in terms of subject areas covered within the skill-texts, would add considerable value to the study. This one feature of the study would aid in ascertaining one factor of interest in the skill-texts. She felt that this was particularly important because of the high correlation between interest, comprehension, and retention. It is understandable that the skill-texts with the greatest variety in content are likely to have the greatest appeal or value for reading laboratory situations where wide interests are encountered. In order that this might be achieved, the writer used the Dewey Decimal Classification System of categorizing books as a guide to variety of content.

Further, the writer related the information gained on organization and variety of topics covered to the goals of Morris Brown College reading program. Morris Brown has both a correctional and a developmental reading program. The correctional program is designed to meet the needs of students who read at the tenth grade level and below as indicated by the Iowa Silent Reading Tests. The developmental reading program is designed to meet the needs of students who score at the eleventh grade reading level and above as indicated by the Iowa Silent Reading Tests. The specific

goals of Morris Brown College reading program as presented in the "Basic Compendium of a Total Program for the Development and Extension of Reading Skills,"<sup>1</sup> follows:

1. Understand the reading process in general and relate these understandings of its nature and meaning to their own test results, responses to other items of appraisal, and thoughtful introspection regarding personal reading habits.
2. Develop effective and substantial study-habits equal to the demands of college-level work.
3. Develop skill, power, and ease in listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies, with special focus on the reading vocabulary.
4. Comprehend and organize reading material with skill and appreciation.
5. Become increasingly alert to style and pattern of reading materials for purposes of determining best uses and relative worth of what is read.
6. Read critically for purposes of developing power in logical thinking about materials and for heightened sensitivity to the uses of propagandistic techniques.
7. Develop increased skill in reading specialized types of materials such as those which constitute the content areas.
8. Cultivate and refine the ability to correlate and integrate many different types of materials in arriving at solutions to larger problems which cut across several specialized areas.
9. Make oral reading more functional and effective in life-areas where its use is crucial, especially for persons with college-level training.
10. Develop and/or maintain an attitude toward

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<sup>1</sup>"Basic Compendium of a Total Program for the Development and Extension of Reading Skills," (The Reading Center, Atlanta University), pp. xiii-xiv.

reading as a pleasurable use of leisure time and self-enrichment.

11. Develop and apply flexible rates of reading to all types of reading materials.
12. Plan and develop a long-range program which should be the nucleus for continuous depth and breadth of reading throughout the adult life of the student.

A list of minimum skills, abilities, and attitudes basic to readiness for the all-freshman reading program follows:

1. Skill in finding main ideas and details in general materials of senior high school level.
2. Oral reading with no difficulties in materials of tenth grade difficulty and below.
3. Mastery of general word-attack skills: use of context clues, structural analysis, phonics, and senior high school dictionary skills.
4. Considerable discipline in concentration on study-type reading materials.
5. Flexible rates of reading range from 150 to 300 words per minute.
6. Skill in use of general locational skills, with ease in use of the Dewey Decimal System of classification.
7. Ability to follow directions.
8. Interest in voluntary reading and some evidence of reading books, representative magazines, and daily newspapers.

The third purpose was to determine the difficulty of the reading selections within the selected reading skill-texts according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. The difficulty of reading materials determine at which level

they can be read and comprehended with little difficulty. The difficulty of a selection or book is usually stated in grade levels, and may be interpreted to mean the number of years of schooling required to read the material with ease and understanding. For example, if a skill-text has a reading difficulty of 11.2, it would be within the comprehension of a person with eleven years and two months of schooling.

The fourth purpose was to discover if the indirect approach or the direct approach of developing comprehension skills was used in the selected reading skill-texts and to classify them accordingly. The type of approach used for checking comprehension determines greatly the response. As a result, this influences greatly the development or improvement of comprehension skills. If the authors of the skill-texts used the direct approach to checking comprehension, the comprehension questions were framed in such a way as to include or refer to the skill. For example, the following types of questions were asked: What is the main idea of the selection: What are the supporting details of the selection? What can be correctly inferred? If the indirect approach to checking comprehension was used, the comprehension questions were framed in such a way to secure the desired response, but did not refer directly to the reading skill.



The fifth purpose was to draw implications which may be of value to the reading program. It was felt that the analysis of the selected skill-texts would yield valuable information from which significant implications could be made. Such implications might be valuable in terms of selecting specifically, the materials analyzed in this study, and generally all materials used for reading programs.

#### Procedure Utilized in Securing and Treating the Data

The procedure which the writer utilized in securing and treating the data are described in procedural steps one through seven which follow:

1. The reading skill-texts, selected on the basis of the recommendations of the senior graduate reading assistants, were secured from the Morris Brown College reading laboratory by the writer.
2. The criteria by which the writer would examine the selected reading skill-texts were set up on the basis of the recommendations of the senior graduate reading assistants, the thesis advisor, and the writer.
3. A legend was set up in order to identify and make table reference to the selected reading skill-texts used in this study.
4. The selected reading skill-texts were examined and analyzed in accordance with the stated purposes and criteria set forth in this research.
5. Tables were set up for the presentation of the data secured.
6. The data secured was presented, analyzed and interpreted by the writer.

7. Implications which might be of value to a reading program were made.

### Reliability of Data

The basic criteria of reliability of this research are: (a) the representativeness of the samples of the materials, and (b) the objectivity and accuracy manifested in interpreting and reporting the data.

### Presentation of Basic Findings

The significant findings of this research are presented in tabular form in seventeen tables. Each table represents one of the major purposes for which the research was carried out with the following exceptions: Table 1 was included to present a legend of the selected reading skill-texts used in this study. Table 3 and Table 4 were presented to represent purpose number two. Tables 5 through 16 were presented to represent purpose number three. No table is presented for purpose number five.

The basic findings are presented in the seventeen tables listed below:

1. Table 1--Legends of the eleven selected reading skill-texts.
2. Table 2--Physical characteristics of the eleven selected reading skill-texts.
3. Table 3--Content of the eleven selected reading skill-texts with reference to organizational structure.

4. Table 4--Content of the eleven selected reading skill-texts with reference to variety of topics covered.
5. Table 5--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Efficient Reading.
6. Table 6--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Breaking the Reading Barrier.
7. Table 7--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of The Improvement of College Reading.
8. Table 8--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Power in Reading Skills.
9. Table 9--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Toward Reading Comprehension.
10. Table 10--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book I.
11. Table 11--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book II.
12. Table 12--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book III.
13. Table 13--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book IV.
14. Table 14--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book V.
15. Table 15--Computational data ascertained regarding readability level of Be a Better Reader, Book VI.
16. Table 16--Summary of computational data ascertained regarding readability level of the eleven selected reading skill-texts.

17. Table 17--Method used for comprehension check, direct or indirect.

Identification and Organization  
of the Materials

The materials used in this study, eleven selected reading skill-texts, have been arranged in alphabetical order according to authors' last names. The presentation, analysis, and interpretation of these eleven selected reading skill-texts will proceed in that order throughout the research.

Legends were assigned to indicate the respective reading skill-texts from which data were extracted, analyzed and presented. These legends were used in the tabular presentations throughout the research and are presented in Table 1 which follows:

TABLE 1  
LEGENDS OF THE ELEVEN SELECTED  
READING SKILL-TEXTS

Title of Skill-Texts	Legends
<u>Efficient Reading</u> . . . . .	A
<u>Breaking the Reading Barrier</u> . . . . .	B
<u>The Improvement of College Reading</u> . . . . .	C
<u>Power in Reading Skills</u> . . . . .	D
<u>Toward Reading Comprehension</u> . . . . .	E
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book I</u> . . . . .	F <sup>1</sup>
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book II</u> . . . . .	F <sup>2</sup>

TABLE 1--Continued

Title of Skill-Texts	Legends
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book III</u> . . . . .	F <sup>3</sup>
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book IV</u> . . . . .	F <sup>4</sup>
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book V</u> . . . . .	F <sup>5</sup>
<u>Be a Better Reader, Book VI</u> . . . . .	F <sup>6</sup>

Efficient Reading by James I. Brown was referred to in the tables as reading skill-text "A." Breaking the Reading Barrier by Doris Wilcox Gilbert was referred to as reading skill-text "B." The Improvement of College Reading by Marvin D. Glock was referred to as reading skill-text "C." Power in Reading Skills by Walter Hill and William Eller was referred to as reading skill-text "D." Toward Reading Comprehension by Julia Florence Sherebourne was referred to as reading skill-text "E." Be a Better Reader, Books I, II, III, IV, V, and VI by Nila Banton Smith were referred to as reading skill-texts "F<sup>1</sup>," "F<sup>2</sup>," "F<sup>3</sup>," "F<sup>4</sup>," "F<sup>5</sup>," and "F<sup>6</sup>," respectively.

#### Physical Characteristics of the Selected Skill-Texts

In order that the writer might determine the physical characteristics of the eleven selected reading skill-texts used in this study, she set up the following criteria for evaluation:

1. If common or uncommon typeface was used in the reading skill-texts. Typeface was considered

uncommon if it used mixed, ornate, or unfamiliar type such as Old English.

2. The length of lines measured in millimeters, with 80 millimeters being the standard.
3. The number of columns, with two columns having preference.
4. The size of type with ten points as standard.
5. Leading or spacing between the lines with one to two point leading for ten point type being the standard.
6. Margins, with approximately 50 per cent being the standard.
7. Length of paragraphs, with seven to fourteen lines being the standard.
8. Color of paper, with off-white being the standard.
9. Special external features such as soft back or hard back, with hard back having preference.
10. The findings of the research done on physical characteristics of the eleven selected reading skill-texts are presented in Table 2.

In analyzing the selected reading skill-texts the writer found that all factors except the number of lines per paragraph and the number of columns remained constant. In order that the writer might determine the average length of the paragraphs for each of the selected reading skill-texts used in this study, she sampled the first and last paragraphs on every tenth page for each of the reading skill-texts.

Efficient Reading had a total of 291 pages. Of the total pages in this skill-text, 50 paragraphs were taken as

TABLE 2

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ELEVEN  
SELECTED READING SKILL-TEXTS

Title of Skill-Text	Format			Legibility			Margins Per Cent	Color of Paper	Special External Features
	Length of Line	Number of Columns	Length of Para.	Type- face	Size of Type	Lead- ing			
A	76mm	2	16	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
B	84mm	2	10	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
C	82mm	2	10	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
D	80mm	2	8	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	too-white	soft-back
E	80mm	2	7	common	11pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>1</sup>	94mm	2	5	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>2</sup>	94mm	2	6	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>3</sup>	94mm	2	7	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>4</sup>	94mm	2	7	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>5</sup>	94mm	2	9	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back
F <sup>6</sup>	94mm	2	10	common	10pt.	2pt.	50.00	off-white	soft-back

samples. The shortest paragraph was three lines and the longest paragraph was 60 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph in Efficient Reading was 16 lines.

Breaking the Reading Barrier had a total of 225 pages. Of the total pages in this skill-text, 46 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was three lines and the longest paragraph was 30 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph in this skill-test was ten lines.

The Improvement of College Reading had a total of 150 pages. Of the total pages in this skill-text, 30 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was three lines and the longest paragraph was 17 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph in this skill-text was eight lines.

Power in Reading Skills had a total of 243 pages. Of the total pages in this skill-text, 48 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was three lines and the longest paragraph was 23 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph for this skill-text was seven lines.

Toward Reading Comprehension had a total of 230 pages. Of the total pages in this skill-text, 46 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was two lines and the longest paragraph was 19 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph in this skill-text was seven lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book I had a total of 128 pages.



Of the total pages in this skill-text, 25 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph sampled was four lines and the longest paragraph sampled was 14 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph for this skill-text was six lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book II had a total of 128 pages.

Of the total pages in this skill-text, 25 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph sampled was four lines and the longest paragraph sampled was 14 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph was six lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book III had a total of 128 pages.

Of the total pages in this skill-text, 25 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was four lines and the longest paragraph was 15 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph for this skill-text was seven lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book IV had a total of 176 pages.

Of the total pages in this skill-text, 34 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was four lines and the longest paragraph was 18 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph for this skill-text was seven lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book V had a total of 176 pages.

Of the total pages in this skill-text, 34 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was four lines and the longest paragraph was 26 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph was nine lines.

Be a Better Reader, Book VI had a total of 208 pages.

Of the total pages in this skill-text, 34 paragraphs were taken as samples. The shortest paragraph was four lines and the longest paragraph was 26 lines. The average number of lines per paragraph for this skill-text was ten lines.

Power in Reading Skills and Be a Better Reader, Books I, II, III, IV, V, and VI combined the use of the double column arrangement with the single column arrangement. In these cases, the writer made some judgment as to which was the overall characteristic of the skill-texts and presented them accordingly.

#### Analysis of Efficient Reading

The physical characteristics of Efficient Reading are described herein. The length of the lines was 76 millimeters or shorter than standard, and the number of columns was two, or standard. The average length of the paragraphs was 16 lines or longer than standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins which included leading and was adequate. The color of the paper was off-white and was adequate. The cover was soft-back and was not adequate, according to criteria. This skill-text was satisfactory in six of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Over-all, the format and legibility of this skill-text were of such standards

that it could be read with relative ease. The average length of the paragraphs, which was longer than average, and the length of the lines, which was shorter than standard, might cause difficulty in the maintenance of thought coherence and hinder both reading speed and reading comprehension. Another unsatisfactory feature of this skill-text was its soft-back cover which might not prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must undergo in reading laboratories.

#### Analysis of Breaking the Reading Barrier

The description of the physical characteristics of Breaking the Reading Barrier follows. The length of the lines was 84 millimeters or longer than standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average length of the paragraphs was ten lines or standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins which included leading which was adequate. The color of the paper was off-white and adequate. The cover was soft-back. This skill-text was satisfactory in seven of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Overall, the format and legibility of this skill-text was highly satisfactory, as its only unsatisfactory area was the length of the lines, which was longer than standard. Inadequacy in this area could cause some difficulty in reading.

speed, but over-all, the physical characteristics of this skill-text lends itself well to reading speed and reading comprehension. The soft-back cover of this skill-text might not prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must undergo in reading laboratories.

#### Analysis of The Improvement of College Reading

The physical characteristic of The Improvement of College Reading are described as follows. The length of the lines was 82 millimeters or longer than standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average length of the paragraphs was eight lines and within standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins which included leading which was adequate. The color of the paper was off-white and adequate. The cover was soft-back. This skill-text was satisfactory in seven of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Over-all, the format and legibility of this skill-text was highly satisfactory as its only unsatisfactory area was the length of the lines, which was longer than standard. Inadequacy in this area could cause some difficulty in reading speed, but overall, the physical characteristics of this skill-text lends itself to reading speed and reading comprehension. The soft-back cover of this skill-text might not

prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must undergo in reading laboratories.

#### Analysis of Power in Reading Skills

The physical characteristics of Power in Reading Skills are described as follows. The length of the lines was 80 millimeters or standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average number of lines per paragraph was ten or within standard, and the size of the type was eleven points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins which included leading which was adequate. The color of the paper was extremely white which was not adequate. The cover was soft-back. The over-all physical characteristics of this skill-text was satisfactory. The color of the paper was too white, which might cause eye shock or other visual discomforts after prolonged reading. The soft-back cover might not prove durable enough for the prolonged usage it must undergo in reading laboratories.

#### Analysis of Toward Reading Comprehension

The physical characteristics of Toward Reading Comprehension follows. The length of the lines was 80 millimeters which was standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average number of lines of the paragraphs sampled was seven which was within standard and the type-face was common and adequate. The size of the type was

eleven points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 40 per cent devoted to margins including leading which was less than was required by standard. The cover was soft-back. This skill-text was satisfactory in seven of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Less than 50 per cent of the page was devoted to margins, but this should cause little difficulty in reading rate and reading comprehension. The soft-back cover might not prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must undergo in reading laboratories.

Analysis of Be a Better Reader,  
Books I and II

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book I follows. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters or longer than standard. The average number of lines per paragraph was five, which was shorter than standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins, including leading, which was within standard. The color of the paper was off-white or standard. The cover was soft-back.

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book II are described as follows. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters or longer than standard, and the average number of lines per paragraph was six, which was shorter than

standard. The typeface was common or within standard and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins which included leading which was within standard. The color of the paper was off-white or standard. The cover was soft-back.

Be a Better Reader, Books I and II were satisfactory in six of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Inadequacies which were found in the length of the lines and the length of the paragraphs might cause difficulties in the maintenance of high reading rates and accurate reading comprehension. The soft-back covers of these skill-texts might not prove to be durable enough for the continuous usage they must undergo in reading laboratories. Overall, the physical characteristics of these skill-texts were barely satisfactory.

#### Analysis of Be a Better Reader, Books III and IV

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book III follows. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters, and the number of columns was two or within standard. The average number of lines per paragraph was seven which was shorter than standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins including leading

which was within standard. The color of the paper was off-white or within standard. The cover was soft-back.

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book IV are described as follows. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters, therefore, longer than standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average number of lines per paragraph was seven or shorter than standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins including leading which was within standard. The color of the paper was off-white or standard. The cover was soft-back.

Be a Better Reader, Books III and IV were satisfactory in six of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. The length of the lines was too long and the number of lines per paragraph was too short. Inadequacies in both of these areas might cause some difficulty in reading rates. The soft-back cover might not prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must undergo in the reading laboratories. Over-all, these skill-texts were barely satisfactory in their physical characteristics.

Analysis of Be a Better Reader,  
Books V and VI

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book V are described as follows. The length of the lines



was 94 millimeters which was longer than standard and the number of lines per paragraph was nine, therefore, within standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins including leading which was within standard, and the color of the paper was off-white or within standard. The cover was soft-back.

The physical characteristics of Be a Better Reader, Book VI follows. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters which was longer than standard, and the number of columns was two or standard. The average number of lines per paragraph was ten, therefore, within standard. The typeface was common or standard, and the size of the type was ten points and the leading was two points, both of which were adequate. Each page had approximately 50 per cent devoted to margins including leading which was within standard. The color of the paper was off-white or standard. The cover was soft-back.

Be a Better Reader, Books V and VI were satisfactory in seven of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. Over-all, the format and legibility of these skill-texts were satisfactory as their only unsatisfactory area was the length of line. Inadequacy in this area could cause some difficulty in reading rate. The soft-back cover might not prove durable enough for the continuous usage it must

undergo in reading laboratories.

### Interpretive conclusions

The eleven selected reading skill-texts used in this study were satisfactory in their over-all physical characteristics. In most areas, these skill-texts met the criteria required by educators and would contribute greatly to the long range goals and objectives of most reading programs as the user of these materials would experience little difficulty with the physical characteristics of the skill-texts. This means essentially that the users of these skill-texts can concentrate on some of the more desirable outcomes of the reading program without the hinderance or discomforts caused when attempting to read materials which do not meet the minimum physical criteria.

One factor of concern was the soft-back covers of these skill-texts. These covers might serve very well if they were used in the limited manner in which they were designed, as dispensable materials. However, since these skill-texts are often adapted to local needs so as to obtain greater usage, these soft-back covers might not be durable enough for the extended usage they must undergo in many reading laboratory situations.

### Organizational Structure of the Skill-Texts

In analyzing the organizational structure of the

selected reading skill-texts used in this study the writer set up the following criteria or standard for analysis and evaluated each skill-text accordingly:

1. The presentation of a purpose before the reading selection.
2. The presentation of the comprehension check immediately following the reading selection rather than locating the comprehension checks in the appendix or in a separate comprehension booklet.
3. The availability of answer keys for comprehension checks, that is, if they are located within the skill-texts themselves or in a separate key booklet or teacher's manual.

#### Analysis of data

The over-all organizational structure of The Improvement of College Reading, Breaking the Reading Barrier, Power in Reading Skills, and Toward Reading Comprehension was highly satisfactory. These skill-texts would be particularly useful, in terms of organization, in promoting both the correctional and the developmental aspects of the reading program at Morris Brown College. Because the objectives and general procedures utilized in presenting the selections for comprehension are so clearly outlined, these skill-texts would be excellent in promoting many of the goals of the reading program. Ability to follow directions; skill in finding the main idea; flexible rates, effective study habits; are just a few of these skills. The organization of these skill-texts would be well suited for the reading laboratory setting at Morris Brown College. Students using

TABLE 3

CONTENT OF THE ELEVEN SELECTED READING SKILL-TEXTS  
WITH REFERENCE TO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Title of Skill-Texts	Statement of Purpose	Location of Comprehension Check	Availability of Answer Keys	Over-all Organizational Structure Rating
A	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
B	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory**
C	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory**
D	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory**
E	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory**
F <sup>1</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
F <sup>2</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
F <sup>3</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
F <sup>4</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
F <sup>5</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
F <sup>6</sup>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

\*\*Highly satisfactory.

these skill-texts would be able to work semi-independently, while at the same time the reading laboratory instructor would be able to spend brief periods of time working with individual students in the reading laboratory.

The over-all organizational structure of Efficient Reading was not satisfactory. No purpose for reading was stated before the reading selections. This type organization would not promote the independent use of this skill-text, particularly in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College. The location of the comprehension questions was also unsatisfactory. However, this skill-text might be useful in both the correctional and the developmental programs at Morris Brown College, particularly if its usage were confined to the reading classes.

The over-all organizational structure of Be a Better Reader, Books I, II, III, IV, V, and VI was satisfactory with its only unsatisfactory area being the unavailability of answer keys. Because of this one factor, these skill-texts might be better suited to the classroom setting in both the correctional and the developmental aspects of the reading program at Morris Brown College. These skill-texts might be used in the reading laboratory setting, however, not on a large scale basis as difficulties might arise in the independent and immediate scoring of work completed by the students.

Interpretive conclusions

The over-all organizational structure of the eleven selected reading skill-texts used in this study was satisfactory. However, one skill-text was found unsatisfactory in two areas, statement of a purpose, and location of comprehension check. Six of the skill-texts were found unsatisfactory in one area, availability of answer keys.

Generally, it can be said that the objectives and general procedure utilized in presenting the selections for comprehension are quite clearly outlined. This type organization should promote the goals and objectives of most reading programs, particularly as they relate to comprehension. The designs of the skill-texts lend themselves well as the statement of purposes should aid in helping students become aware of the reasons for reading a given selection. This is particularly true if students are not sophisticated enough to set purposes of their own. The satisfactory location of the comprehension checks lends itself to the immediate rereading of the comprehension selections as the needs are revealed in the scoring of the comprehension questions.

The satisfactory location of the answer keys promote immediate reinforcement of learning; in addition to this, it can be a positive factor in the overall organization of the reading laboratories. This one feature can conserve time for the reading laboratory instructor.

Some of the specific objectives promoted by the eleven selected reading skill-texts with reference to organizational structure are: ability to follow directions; setting goals or purposes for reading; and, independent work-study skills and habits.

The organization of these skill-texts would be well suited for the classroom setting at Morris Brown College and with few exceptions the reading laboratory setting. Students would be able to use these skill-texts with little direct teacher supervision. This feature alone makes these skill-texts a desirable addition, not only for the Morris Brown College reading program, but also for other institutions or reading programs.

#### Variety of Topics Covered in the Skill-Texts

In order that the writer might determine the content of the eleven selected reading skill-texts used in this study, she selected the Dewey Decimal System of Classification so that she could set up comprehensive categories. The selections within the skill-texts were scanned so that the categories in which they would fall could be determined and tallied.

The significant findings of the research done on the variety of topics covered within the eleven selected reading skill-texts are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4

CONTENT OF THE ELEVEN SELECTED READING SKILL-TEXTS  
WITH REFERENCE TO VARIETY OF TOPICS COVERED

Topics	Title of Skill - Texts										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
<u>Philosophy</u>	6		1		2						
Psychology	9	1	9	6	6			1	2		
Conduct	1		5	4	1						
Thrift											
<u>Religion</u>			1		1					1	
Bible, Bible stories					1						
Mythology											
<u>Social Science</u>				1	2						
Social problems			2	2	1						
Statistics											
Political Science and Civics	1		1	1	2						2
Community life	2		1			2	1	2	1		
Immigration					1						
Negroes											
International relations, peace			1	1	1						1
Parliamentary practice											1
Political parties				1							1
<u>Economics</u>	4			4	1						
Capital and labor				1	1			1		2	
Money and banking				1							
Natural resources, conservation		1		1	1		1	1		1	
Public finance, taxation											
Production and consumer problems											1
<u>Law</u>											
Government and administration	1			2					1		



TABLE 4--Continued

Topics	Title of Skill - Texts										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
Local Government				1			1			1	1
United States government	1		1		1		2		1	3	1
Foreign government					1						
Army				2	1						
Navy				1							
Associations and institutions											
Crime and criminals		1									
Education	24		11	8	3			3	1		2
Vocation	4		1		1			2			
Elementary schools					1						
High schools											
Colleges and universities			1		1						
Commerce and transportation											
Mail service											
Rail roads											
Ships, merchant marine											
Manners and customs	3		2						1	1	
Customs											
Family relations	4		2		1			3			
Holidays											
Etiquette	3		1						1		1
Fairy tales, folklore, legends			1	2					1		
Languages			1								
English language	1										
English dictionaries											
English synonyms											
English grammar											

TABLE 4--Continued

Topics	Title of Skill - Texts										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
German language											
French language											
Spanish language											
Latin language											
<u>Science</u>					1	3	3	1			
General science			2						2	2	
History of science											
Mathematics			2			1	1	2	4	7	6
Astronomy	1									1	2
Physics	1										2
Electricity											
Chemistry	1							1	1	6	2
Geology, physical geography			1	2				1	2	2	1
Weather	1								1	1	1
Minerals	1			1			1				
Biology	1									1	
Prehistoric and primitive man			2								
Microscopy	1										
Botany					1	1	1		1		
Trees and Shrubs								1	1	1	
Flowers									1		
Bacteriology			1								
Zoology											
Animal stories	9					1	1	1	2	1	
Ocean life								2			
Insects									1		2
Fishes, frogs										1	

TABLE 4--Continued

Topics	Title of Skill - Texts										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
Birds			1								1
Reptiles		1									
Animals			1							1	1
<u>Useful Arts</u>											
Inventions		1	3	2		3	3		1		1
Medicine	1		1	1						1	
Health and physical education		1	5	1		1	1	1			
Sex education											
Sanitation, safety, fire prevention					1			1			
Engineering											
Mechanics and machinery						1	1	1			
Electrical engineering and appliances											
Radio and television											
Aeronautics			1						1	1	
Automobiles					1			1		1	
Agriculture			3		1						
Agricultural pests											
Field crops								1			
Fruit culture											
Forest and forestry		1	1						1		
Gardens and gardening								3			
Domestic animals, poultry			1								
Dairying											
Bee keeping											
<u>Home economics</u>											
Cooking, food, diet											
Housing and house planning											
Interior decoration, furniture											

TABLE 4--Continued

Topics	Title of Skill - Tests										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
Dressmaking, clothing					1						
Nursing, care of children											
Business methods											
Printing											
Industrial chemistry										1	
Manufacturing				1							
Manual training, handicrafts											
Carpentry, woodwork, shop work											
<u>Fine Arts</u>											
General history of art					2						
Architecture											
Sculpture											
Drawing, decoration											
Lettering											
Painting pictures											
Photography											
Moving pictures			2	1	2						
Music											
Opera					1						
Amusements			1					1			
Amusements, hobbies					1						
Theatre and entertainments			1					1			
Indoor games											
Outdoor games and sports	1		2	4			2				
<u>Literature</u>	2		4	9	5				4		
Literature reference books											
Books and reading		1	1			6	2		5		1
Rhetoric and composition			1								
Public speaking and debate											

TABLE 4--Continued

Topics	Title of Skill - Texts										
	A	B	C	D	E	F <sup>1</sup>	F <sup>2</sup>	F <sup>3</sup>	F <sup>4</sup>	F <sup>5</sup>	F <sup>6</sup>
Collection of lit. quotations											
General history of literature											
American and Eng. lit. his. and criticism											
Poetry, individual writers			2		1			6	4		2
Poetry, collections									4		4
Drama, individual writers									1		
Shakespear											
Drama collections											
Essays, individual writers			4					1	1		1
Essays, collections											
Orations, individual writers											
Orations, collections											
<u>History</u>			1	1	3	3	6	4	1		2
World history											
Geography and travel		1					1				
Biography, collections					1						2
Flags											

Analysis of data

Efficient Reading covered 17 subject areas, and it presented selections in five major works. Its greatest emphasis was on education. Breaking the Reading Barrier covered 17 subject areas, and it presented selections in six major works. The Improvement of College Reading covered 42 subject areas, and it presented selections in nine major works. Its greatest emphasis was on psychology and education. Power in Reading Skills covered 28 subject areas, and it presented selections in eight major works. Its greatest emphasis was on psychology and education. Toward Reading Comprehension covered 35 subject areas and it presented selections in nine major works. Its greatest emphasis was on psychology. Be a Better Reader, Book I covered 11 subject areas, and it presented reading selections in five major works. Its greatest emphasis was on books and reading. Be a Better Reader, Book II covered 16 subject areas, and it presented selections in seven major works. Its greatest emphasis was on science and history. Be a Better Reader, Book III covered 25 subject areas, and it presented selections in seven major works. Its greatest emphasis was on poetry and history. Be a Better Reader, Book IV covered 28 subject areas, and it presented selections in seven major works. Its greatest emphasis was on books and reading. Be a Better Reader, Book V covered 21 subject areas, and it presented selections in five major works. Its greatest

emphasis was on mathematics. Be a Better Reader, Book VI covered 25 subject areas, and it presented selections in five major works. Its greatest emphasis was on mathematics.

#### Interpretive conclusions

These skill-texts covered a wide variety of content if taken altogether. That is, there is some selection in almost every area presented in the Dewey Decimal System of Classification.

These skill-texts should be very good in meeting the wide range of reading interests encountered in most laboratory situations, particularly Morris Brown College. This one feature could be of incalculable value in promoting the desire to read and in holding the student's attention in the reading laboratory setting. It might also promote extended reading beyond the reading laboratory setting. Included also are selections to meet the informational needs of the students. The quantity of selections in philosophy and education should be of special interest to Morris Brown College. Selections in these areas should certainly contribute in these instructional areas.

More specifically, these skill-texts would be especially helpful in promoting the following stated aims of Morris Brown College's reading program: (1) Develop increased skill in reading specialized types of materials such as those which constitute the content areas; (2) Cultivate and refine

the ability to correlate and integrate many different types of materials. . .and, (3) Develop and maintain an attitude toward reading as a pleasurable use of leisure time and self-enrichment.

Reading Difficulty of the Selected  
Reading Skill-Texts

In order that the writer might determine the reading difficulty of the selected reading skill-texts used in this study, she applied the Dale-Chall readability formula by Edgar Dale and Jean S. Chall.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the directions for applying this formula the following procedure was used in collecting the data:

1. Samples, 100 words every tenth page, were taken from each of the selected reading skill-texts.
2. The number of words in the sample was recorded.
3. The number of sentences in the sample was recorded.
4. The number of words which did not appear on the Dale list was recorded.
5. The average sentence length was computed and recorded.
6. The Dale score of percentage of words outside the Dale list was computed by dividing the number of words not on the Dale list by the number of words in the sample, and multiplying by 100.
7. The average sentence length was multiplied by .0496.
8. The Dale score, obtained in procedural step 6, was multiplied by .1579.

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<sup>1</sup>Dale and Chall, op. cit., pp. 11-28.



9. The constant 3.6365 was added to the formula raw score obtained in procedural steps 7 and 8 and a formula raw score was obtained.
10. The formula raw score for all of the samples taken for each reading skill-text was added and then divided by the number of samples to get the average.
11. The average formula raw score was corrected to a corrected grade level according to the correction table.

The findings of the research done on reading difficulty are presented in tables five through sixteen which follow.

TABLE 5

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
READABILITY LEVEL OF EFFICIENT READING

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	110
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	5
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	17.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	22
Raw score . . . . .	7.3011
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-- 10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Efficient Reading

Efficient Reading was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. After computing according to the Dale Chall formula, the

writer derived a raw score of 7.3011, which was converted into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grades. This means essentially that students with ninth or tenth grade reading levels as indicated by standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the Morris Brown College correctional reading program. That is, some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the selections within this skill-text with ease. However, the purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program.

TABLE 6

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
READABILITY LEVEL OF BREAKING  
THE READING BARRIER

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	200
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	5
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	11.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	40
Raw score . . . . .	7.3574
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Breaking the Reading Barrier

Breaking the Reading Barrier was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. Through use of the formula a raw score of 7.3574 was derived. This raw score was converted into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grade. This means essentially that students with nine or ten years of schooling will find the selections in this skill-text within their reading range. Students who score at the ninth or the tenth grade level on standardized reading tests should have no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the Morris Brown College correctional reading program. That is, some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to

TABLE 7

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING READABILITY  
LEVEL OF THE IMPROVEMENT OF COLLEGE READING

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	126
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	5
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	19.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	28
Raw score . . . . .	7.8723
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-- 10th Grade

read the selections within this skill-text with ease. However, the purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might be used in the developmental program at Morris Brown College as well.

#### Reading difficulty of The Improvement of College Reading

The Improvement of College Reading was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. After computing readability, the writer derived a raw score of 7.8723. This raw score was converted into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grade. Students with nine or ten years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text with no difficulty. Students who score at the ninth grade or the tenth grade level on standardized reading tests should have no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the Morris Brown College correctional reading program. Some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the selections within this skill-text with ease. The purpose for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might be used in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College as well.

TABLE 8

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF POWER IN  
READING SKILLS

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	121
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	5
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	21.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	24
Raw score . . . . .	8.1432
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	11th--12th Grade

Reading difficulty of Power in  
Reading Skills

Power in Reading Skills was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. A raw score of 7.8723 was derived and converted into a grade level difficulty of eleventh through the twelfth grade. Students with eleven or twelve years of schooling should have no difficulty reading this skill-text. Students who score at the eleventh or the twelfth grade level on standardized reading tests can be expected to read this skill-text with little or no difficulty. This skill-text should be challenging for students in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.

TABLE 9

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF TOWARD  
READING COMPREHENSION

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	106
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	6
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	16.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	18
Raw score . . . . .	7.0557
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th--10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Toward Reading  
 Comprehension

Toward Reading Comprehension was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. A formula score of 7.0557 was derived, and converted into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grade levels. This means that students with nine or ten years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text. Students who score at the ninth or tenth grade level on standardized reading tests can be expected to read this skill-text with little or no difficulty.

This skill-text can be used in Morris Brown's correctional reading program. Some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the

selections within this skill-text with ease. The purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might be used in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College as well.

TABLE 10

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK I

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	104
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	8
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	9.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	13
Raw score . . . . .	4.8050
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	4th Grade and Below

Reading difficulty of Be a Better  
Reader, Book I

Be a Better Reader, Book I was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. Computation yielded a raw score of 4.8050, which was computed into a grade level difficulty of fourth grade level and below. This means essentially that students with

four years of schooling or less should be able to read this skill-text with ease. Students who score at the fourth grade level or below on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text. It can be anticipated that this skill-text will not have great usage in the correctional or the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.

TABLE 11

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK II

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	102
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	7
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	10.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	15
Raw score . . . . .	5.9595
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	5th--6th Grade

Reading difficulty of Be a Better Reader  
Book II

Be a Better Reader, Book II was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. A raw score of 5.9595 was derived, and converted into a grade level difficulty of fifth through the



sixth grades. Students with five or six years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text with ease. Students who score at the fifth or the sixth grade level on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text. This skill-text can be used in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.

TABLE 12

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK III

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples reocrded . . . . .	104
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	7
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	14.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	14
Raw score . . . . .	6.1174
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Be a Better  
Reader, Book III

Be a Better Reader, Book III was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. A raw score of 6.1174 was derived, and this was converted into a grade level difficulty of seventh through the eighth grades. Students with seven or eight years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text

with ease. Students who score at the seventh or the eighth grade level on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text. This skill-text can be used in Morris Brown College's correctional reading program.

TABLE 13  
COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK IV

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	107
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	5
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	15.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	15
Raw score . . . . .	7.0466
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Be a Better  
Reader, Book IV

Be a Better Reader, Book IV was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. After computing according to this formula, the writer derived a raw score of 7.0466 and converted it into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grade levels. This means that students with nine or ten years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text with ease.

Students who score at the ninth or the tenth grade levels on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College. Some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the selections within this skill-text with ease. The purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might also be used in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.

TABLE 14

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
 READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK V

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	108
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	6
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	16.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	18
Raw score . . . . .	7.0557
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Be a Better Reader, Book V

Be a Better Reader, Book V was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. A formula raw score of 7.0557 was derived, and converted into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grade levels. This means that students with nine or ten years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text with ease. Students who score at the ninth or the tenth grade level on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College. Some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the selections within this skill-text with ease. The purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might also be used in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.

TABLE 15

COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED REGARDING  
READABILITY LEVEL OF BE A BETTER  
READER, BOOK VI

Measurements	Results
Average number of words in the samples recorded . . . . .	120

TABLE 15--Continued

Measurements	Results
Average number of sentences in the samples recorded . . . . .	7
Percentage of words outside the Dale list . . . . .	19.00
Average sentence length . . . . .	17
Raw score . . . . .	7.3129
Grade level difficulty . . . . .	9th-10th Grade

Reading difficulty of Be a Better  
Reader, Book VI

Be a Better Reader, Book VI was analyzed for level of reading difficulty according to the Dale-Chall readability formula. After computing according to the formula the writer derived a raw score of 7.3129 and converted it into a grade level difficulty of ninth through the tenth grades. This means that students with nine or ten years of schooling should be able to read this skill-text with ease. Students who score at the ninth or the tenth grade level on standardized reading tests should have little or no difficulty reading this skill-text.

This skill-text can be used in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College. Some of the students in the correctional reading program can be expected to read the selections within this skill-text with ease. The purposes for reading or the comprehension questions might demand the higher level skills dealt with in the

developmental reading program. Therefore, this skill-text might also be used in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.

Reading difficulty of the eleven  
reading skill-texts

Table 16 presents in summary that the range of reading difficulty of the eleven selected reading skill-texts

TABLE 16

SUMMARY OF COMPUTATIONAL DATA ASCERTAINED  
REGARDING THE READABILITY LEVEL OF  
THE ELEVEN SKILL-TEXTS

Title of Skill-Texts	Formula Raw Score	Grade Levels
A	7.3011	9 - 10
B	7.3574	9 - 10
C	7.8723	9 - 10
D	8.1432	11 - 12
E	7.0557	9 - 10
F <sup>1</sup>	4.8050	4 and Below
F <sup>2</sup>	5.9595	5 - 6
F <sup>3</sup>	6.1174	7 - 8
F <sup>4</sup>	7.0466	9 - 10
F <sup>5</sup>	7.0557	9 - 10
F <sup>6</sup>	7.3129	9 - 10

used in this study was from below fourth grade level up to

twelfth grade level, with raw scores ranging from 4.8050 to 8.1432. Most of the reading skill-texts used in this study were written for grade levels nine and ten. One skill-text was written for grade twelve. The range of reading difficulties presented in these skill-texts collectively can encompass a developmental, correctional, or remedial college reading program.

### Interpretive conclusions

It can be said with confidence that the sentence length and the number of unfamiliar words presented in the eleven selected reading skill-texts are of such that they will meet the reading needs, in terms of reading difficulty, of students from below grade four up to grade twelve. However, it cannot be predicted from the data presented in tables five through sixteen the type of comprehension scores the students will make on the comprehension selections within the reading skill-texts. That is, the reader's purpose, interest, and background in the subject matter were not considered in the data presented. Therefore, even though a reading selection may be written at the eleventh grade reading difficulty level, the expectations or comprehension questions might be of such nature or difficulty that they demand reading or thinking skills on an even higher level. Keeping these intervening factors related to comprehension in mind, the writer could say with great confidence

that these skill-texts can be used in a developmental or remedial college reading program.

The selections within these skill-texts should encompass many of the lower level and the upper level comprehension skills. More specifically, the following skills will probably be dealt with in these skill-texts:

1. Develop skill, power, and ease in listening, speaking, reading and writing vocabularies with special focus on the reading vocabulary.
2. Comprehend and organize reading material with skill and appreciation.
3. Become increasingly alert to style and pattern of reading material for purposes of determining best uses and relative worth.
4. Read critically for purposes of developing power in logical thinking about materials and for heightened sensitivity to the uses of propagandistic techniques.
5. Develop increased skill in reading specialized types of materials such as those which constitute the content areas.
6. Cultivate and refine the ability to correlate and integrate many different types of materials in arriving at solutions to larger problems which cut across several specialized areas.

These skill-texts are certainly desirable in terms of the specific and long range objectives of Morris Brown College's developmental and correctional reading programs. They could be used for any other college reading program designed to develop or improve comprehension skills.

Means of Developing Comprehension  
Through the Reading Skill-Texts

The eleven selected reading skill-texts were



analyzed to discover the type of approach used for checking comprehension within each skill-text. The following procedure was used in collecting the data.

1. A worksheet was designed for recording the total number of comprehension questions, the total using the direct approach, the total using the indirect approach, and the over-all classification.
2. The comprehension checks for each of the eleven selected reading skill-texts was read and each question was categorized as direct or indirect and placed in the appropriate column.
3. The percentage of direct questions and indirect questions was derived.
4. The over-all classification was derived.

The findings of the research done on the type of approach for checking comprehension, direct or indirect are presented in Table 17.

#### Analysis of data

The analysis of the eleven reading skill-texts selected for this study revealed that all of the skill-texts, with the exception of Breaking the Reading Barrier, used predominantly the indirect approach to checking comprehension. Of the skill-texts analyzed, Power in Reading Skills was more evenly balanced between the two approaches with 43.01 per cent of the questions using the direct approach and 56.99 per cent of the questions using the indirect approach. Be a Better Reader, Books I, IV, and V were the most unevenly balanced skill-texts in terms of approaches with above 90 per

TABLE 17

TYPE OF APPROACH USED FOR CHECKING COMPREHENSION,  
DIRECT OR INDIRECT

Title of Skill-Texts	Total No. Questions	Direct Approach		Indirect Approach		Predominant Approach
		Total	Per Cent	Total	Per Cent	
A	680	104	15.29	576	84.70	Indirect
B	757	489	65.92	268	34.08	Direct
C	779	160	20.54	619	79.46	Indirect
D	644	277	43.01	367	56.99	Indirect
E	446	69	15.47	377	84.53	Indirect
F <sup>1</sup>	311	16	5.20	295	94.86	Indirect
F <sup>2</sup>	408	43	10.54	365	89.46	Indirect
F <sup>3</sup>	326	67	20.55	259	79.45	Indirect
F <sup>4</sup>	438	31	7.08	407	92.92	Indirect
F <sup>5</sup>	480	43	8.96	437	91.04	Indirect
F <sup>6</sup>	583	98	16.81	485	83.19	Indirect

cent of the comprehension questions using the indirect approach.

### Interpretive conclusions

Over-all, the comprehension questions in the eleven reading skill-texts selected for this study are framed in such a way to secure the desired response without referring directly to the reading skills. Although evidence in support of indirect questions is not conclusive, research does indicate that the indirect approach does stimulate more active participation by the students; provide the teacher with the students' perception of the situation; and, result in the students developing more responsibility for diagnosing their difficulties and suggesting a plan of action.<sup>1</sup> As a result, this type of approach aids students in developing independence in learning.

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund J. Amidon and Ned A. Flanders, The Role of the Teacher in the Classroom (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Association for Productive Teaching, 1967), p. 82.

### CHAPTER III

#### SUMMARY AND RECAPITULATION

From 1607 to 1960 and beyond, reading underwent a number of changes. These changes included undue stress in the use of the alphabet and spelling methods; over emphasis on the word method; and, undue stress on silent reading. Presently, attempts are being made to delve more deeply into the reading process and to define more broadly the factors that affect it.

During the time of the second world war, reading was revealed as a universal concern as it was discovered that reading difficulties existed on all levels of education. One outgrowth of this discovery was attempts made to deal more effectively with reading problems, particularly on the college level. One attempt at dealing with this problem was the development of two types of reading materials, the text-book oriented materials and the mechanical-aid oriented materials. These materials for reading instruction have been published in increasing quantities.

This problem grew out of the writer's interest in the development of comprehension and previous experiences of working with materials designed to develop comprehension

abilities. Class lectures and discussions along with information in regard to research gained at the Annual Conference on Reading held at the Atlanta University Reading Center, April, 1965, served to heighten this interest. These factors interested the writer in doing a more extensive study which would permit a more discriminating appraisal of some selected reading skill-texts.

It was hoped that research into this problem would reveal data which would aid teachers and department heads in the following ways: (1) selecting skill-texts designed to meet the needs of freshmen enrolled in college reading programs similar to Morris Brown College's reading program; and, (2) using reading skill-texts designed to meet the needs of freshmen enrolled in college reading programs similar to Morris Brown College's reading program.

The problem in this study involved a content analysis of eleven selected reading skill-texts used to aid in the development of general comprehension abilities in the freshman reading program at Morris Brown College.

There were five purposes of this study. These five purposes were stated as follows:

1. To describe the physical characteristics of the selected reading skill-texts including format, legibility, and special external features according to stated criteria.
2. To describe the content of the selected reading skill-texts according to organization and variety of topics covered, with particular reference

to the goals of Morris Brown College's reading program.

3. To determine the difficulty of the reading selections within the selected reading skill-texts according to the Dale-Chall readability formula.
4. To discover if the direct or indirect approach of developing comprehension skills is used in the selected reading skill-texts and to classify them accordingly.
5. To draw implications which may be of value to the reading program.

There are five significant terms used in this study.

These terms and their definitions follow:

1. "Content Analysis" - a research technique used for both subjective qualitative appraisal and the objective systematic, quantitative description of communication content.<sup>1</sup>
2. "Skill-text" - a special kind of textbook to be used by students in reading courses, designed for the development or improvement of reading skills.
3. "Direct Approach" - a type of comprehension check in which the comprehension questions are so framed that students are asked to respond directly to a given skill or skills.
4. "Indirect Approach" - a type of comprehension check in which the comprehension questions are so framed as to check various comprehension skills without referring directly to the skill itself.
5. "General Comprehension" - a blanket term applied to various types of meaning-getting skills which cover a whole area of thought-getting processes in reading. These processes include the following:  
Literal Comprehension--"the skill of getting the primary, direct, 'literal' meaning of a

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<sup>1</sup>Berelson, op. cit., p. 6.

word, idea, or sentence in context."<sup>1</sup>

Interpretation--interpretation in reading material ". . . has been used to include those skills necessary in getting deeper meanings in addition to those obtained by simple literal comprehension."<sup>2</sup>

Critical Reading--". . ., critical reading includes literal comprehension and interpretation . . ., but it goes further than either or these in that the reader evaluates, that is, passes personal judgment on the quality, the value, the accuracy, and the truthfulness of what is read."<sup>3</sup>

Specific Word Meanings--involves working with specific word meanings, abstractions, meanings of variant word forms, synonyms, antonyms, similies, and metaphorical language.<sup>4</sup>

Rate of Comprehension--the number of words per minute with acceptable understanding.

This study was limited in two ways: (1) to a selection of eleven reading skill-texts chosen on the basis of the recommendations of the senior graduate reading assistants in the Atlanta University Center reading program; and, (2) to an investigation of only those selections within the reading skill-texts which dealt with general comprehension.

This study was done in connection with the Morris Brown College reading program and was conducted within the Atlanta University Center and the Public Library in the city of Atlanta. The activities involved in collecting, assembling, and treatment of the data, and the research report were performed during the second semester and the summer of

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Reading Instruction, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

the 1965-66 school year. Final completion of the report was done the summer of 1968.

The materials used in this study were eleven selected reading skill-texts used for the development of general comprehension abilities in the freshman reading program at Morris Brown College. These skill-texts include Efficient Reading by James I. Brown of the University of Minnesota; Breaking the Reading Barrier by Doris Wilcox Gilbert who is the head of the university extension reading improvement program at the University of California; The Improvement of College Reading by Marvin D. Glock of Cornell University; Power in Reading Skills by Walter Hill and William Eller. Walter Hill is the director of the reading-study laboratory at the University of Oregon and William Eller is the director of the Reading Center at the State University of New York at Buffalo; Toward Reading Comprehension by Julia Florence Sherbourne of the University of Arkansas; and, Be a Better Reader, Books I, II, III, IV, V, and VI by Nila Banton Smith, professor of education at New York University.

The method of research used in this study was the Descriptive Survey Method employing the specific technique of content analysis.

The procedural steps used in this study are described in the eight steps which follow:

1. Copies of the eleven selected reading skill-texts were secured.



2. Literature pertinent to this study was reviewed and summarized.
3. The physical characteristics of the selected skill-texts including length of line, size of type, adequacy of leading, and length of paragraphs were described according to criteria stated for acceptable readability as reported by George D. Spache, Good Reading for Poor Readers.
4. The content of the selected skill-texts was described according to organization and variety of topics covered.
5. The skill-texts were described in term of methods of checking comprehension skills, direct or indirect.
6. The Dale-Chall readability formula was applied to discover the difficulty of the reading selections.
7. The data were organized and classified.
8. Conclusions, implications, and recommendations were made on the basis of the findings.

#### Summary of the Survey of Related Literature

The significant aspects of the related literature was surveyed and presented with three major emphases: (1) nature of comprehension, (2) research involving similar subjects, and (3) the technique of content analysis. Published and unpublished literature was reviewed.

One of the earliest efforts to discover the process involved in comprehension was done by Thorndike in 1917. He concluded that comprehension involves the same kind of organization and analytic action of ideas as that which occurs in higher level thinking. Judd and Buswell's study of different types of silent reading concluded that the mental

processes involved in reading vary with the kind of material read. Hillard reported that intelligence and reading meaning vocabulary are more closely related to comprehension than any of the other factors studied.<sup>1</sup>

Smith says that the term "comprehension" entered our professional reading vocabulary in the early twenties' and has been used to cover the entire area of specific process in understanding the import of reading text.<sup>2</sup>

Spache states that "comprehension is dependent upon the reader's background, and his learning."<sup>3</sup>

Three other sources concerned with the nature of comprehension are the reasoned analysis of experts, experimental research, and statistical analysis.<sup>4</sup>

In an effort to distinguish and categorize reading skills Burkart did a statistical analysis that revealed 214 different reading skills.<sup>5</sup> Letton approached the problem from the relative difficulty of various facts and suggested five levels or concepts.<sup>6</sup> Smith broke the skills down into three main categories which are to represent different types

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<sup>1</sup>Strang, McCullough and Traxler, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Smith, "Critical Reading," op. cit., pp. 409-10.

<sup>3</sup>Spache, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Karlin, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>6</sup>Smith, Reading Instruction, p. 258.

of thought-getting processes.<sup>1</sup>

The technique of content analysis has been used to describe trends in communication content, to compare media or "levels" of communication, as an aid in technical research operations, to measure the "readability" of communication materials, to discover stylistic features, et cetera.<sup>2</sup> In its early application it was used by students of journalism and by sociologists. It came into commercial use when Towhey applied it to discover the treatment given various topics and events in a sample of the nation's press.<sup>3</sup>

Educators' interest in the technique of content analysis began with the analysis of school books and childrens' literature and expanded to the analysis of content communication for adults.<sup>4</sup>

The Lorge formula grew out of studies done by Gray and Leary. This formula was inadequate for materials above the eight grade level; therefore, Rudolph Flesch produced his readability formula to overcome that shortcoming.<sup>5</sup> The Flesch's formula was found to have serious shortcomings in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Berelson, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-24.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-24, 63-64.

its arbitrary count of affixes. To overcome the shortcomings in the Flesch formula the Dale-Chall formula was developed. Dale and Chall developed a single two-factor formula that is easy to apply.<sup>1</sup>

According to Spache<sup>2</sup> readability formulas are valid and justified for specific purposes. They do not indicate the exact degree of difficulty for all readers but they do arrange materials in order of their difficulty for the reader. However, the formulas are not intended to take the place of competent judgment on the part of educators.

Published research utilizing the technique of content analysis and the application of readability formulas include investigations done by Porch, Tubbs, and Anderson. These investigations utilized the Dale-Chall readability formula.<sup>3</sup>

Jones used the technique of content analysis to investigate the SRA Reading Laboratories.<sup>4</sup>

Dimitroff analyzed social science textbooks widely used in large city school systems.<sup>5</sup> Blue used the technique of content analysis to determine readability factors that

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<sup>1</sup>Dale and Chall, op. cit., pp. 26-67.

<sup>2</sup>Spache, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, op. cit., p. 204.

<sup>4</sup>Jones and Shy, op. cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>5</sup>Dimitroff, op. cit., p. 135.

influenced seventh grade pupils' comprehension of science materials.<sup>1</sup>

Local, unpublished research has been done utilizing the technique of content analysis by Williams,<sup>2</sup> Nwokorie,<sup>3</sup> Smith,<sup>4</sup> Jones,<sup>5</sup> Hayes,<sup>6</sup> Mullins,<sup>7</sup> and Jacobs.<sup>8</sup> All of these studies revealed information related to content in various types of publications.

### Findings of the Study

The basic findings of the research done on the content of the eleven reading skill-texts selected for this study are summarized and presented in the paragraphs which follow.

### Summary of findings regarding content of Efficient Reading

The basic findings of the research done on content of Efficient Reading are:

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<sup>1</sup>Blue, op. cit., p. 5625.

<sup>2</sup>Williams, op. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Nwokorie, op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Smith, "Content Analysis."

<sup>5</sup>Jones, op. cit.

<sup>6</sup>Hayes, op. cit.

<sup>7</sup>Mullins, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup>Jacobs, op. cit.

1. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found satisfactory in all of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics with the exception of one. This area was the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. It was found satisfactory in all of the areas analyzed under organizational structure.
3. This skill-text covered 17 subject areas under variety of topics covered, which is satisfactory in meeting many of the reading needs, in terms of interest, of many students enrolled in college reading programs.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade level or suitable for a correctional college reading program.
5. The predominant approach to means of developing comprehension was indirect which was the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content of  
Breaking the Reading Barrier

The basic findings of the research done on content of Breaking the Reading Barrier are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were the length of the line, which was 84 millimeters and longer than standard and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. It was found satisfactory in all of the areas analyzed under organizational structure.
3. This skill-text covered 17 subject areas under variety of topics covered, which is satisfactory in meeting many of the reading needs, in terms of interest, of many students enrolled in a college reading program.

4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade, which is suitable for the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach to means of developing comprehension was direct which is least preferable of the two approaches.

#### Summary of Findings regarding content of The Improvement of College Reading

The basic findings of the research done on content of The Improvement of College Reading are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were the length of line, which was 82 millimeters and longer than standard and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. It was found satisfactory in all of the areas analyzed under organizational structure.
3. This skill-text covered 42 subject areas under variety of topics covered. This number of subject areas indicate the possibility of meeting a large number of interest.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade. This skill-text would be suitable, in terms of readability, for the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach to checking comprehension was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

#### Summary of findings regarding content of Power in Reading Skills

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Power in Reading Skills are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were the color of the paper, which was extremely white, and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. It was found satisfactory in all of the areas analyzed under organizational structure.
3. This skill-text covered 28 subject areas under variety of topics covered. This variety of subject areas should be adequate in meeting a large number of interest encountered in reading laboratories.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 11th through the 12th grade. This skill-text would be suitable, in terms of difficulty, in meeting the needs of students in the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach to checking comprehension was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Toward Reading Comprehension

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Toward Reading Comprehension are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were inadequate margins and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was highly satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. It was found satisfactory in all of the areas analyzed under organizational structure.
3. This skill-text covered 35 subject areas under variety of topics covered. This large variety of subject areas should be quite adequate in



meeting a large number of reading and background interests.

4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade. This skill-text should meet the needs of students in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach to checking comprehension was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

#### Summary of findings regarding content of Be a Better Reader, Book I

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Be a Better Reader, Book I are:

1. Under physical characteristics, this skill-text barely met the minimum criteria for satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in three of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters and longer than standard; the number of lines per paragraph was five and shorter than standard; and, the cover was soft-back.
2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 11 subject areas under variety of topics covered. This is a small but adequate variety of subject areas.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was grade four and below. This level of reading difficulty probably will not be adequate in meeting the needs of students in the correctional or the developmental reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Be a Better Reader, Book II

The basic findings of the research done on content of Be a Better Reader, Book II are:

1. Under physical characteristics, this skill-text barely met the minimum criteria for satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in three of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters and longer than standard; the number of lines per paragraph was five and shorter than standard; and, the cover was soft-back.
2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 16 subject areas under variety of topics covered. This variety in subject areas is adequate in meeting the variety of reading interest encountered in reading laboratory situations.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 5th through 6th grade. This skill-text might be used in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Be a Better Reader, Book III

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Be a Better Reader, Book III are:

1. Under physical characteristics, this skill-text barely met the minimum criteria for satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in three of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters and longer

than standard; the number of lines per paragraph was five and shorter than standard; and, the cover was soft-back.

2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 25 subject areas. This large variety of subject areas should be quite adequate for meeting a large number of reading and background interest.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 7th through the 8th grade level. This skill-text should meet the needs of students in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Be a Better Reader, Book IV

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Be a Better Reader, Book IV are:

1. Under physical characteristics, this skill-text barely met the minimum criteria for satisfactory. It was unsatisfactory in three of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. The length of the lines was 94 millimeters and longer than standard; the number of lines per paragraph was five and shorter than standard; and, the cover was soft-back.
2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 25 subject areas. This large variety of subject areas should be quite adequate in meeting a large number of reading interest.

4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade level. This skill-text should meet the needs of students in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Be a Better Reader, Book V

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Be a Better Reader, Book V are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were the length of the lines which was 94 millimeters, and longer than standard, and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 21 subject areas. This large variety of subject areas should be quite adequate in meeting the large number of reading interest encountered in reading laboratory situations.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade level. This skill-text should meet the needs of students in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Summary of findings regarding content  
of Be a Better Reader, Book VI

The basic findings of the research done on the content of Be a Better Reader, Book VI are:

1. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall physical characteristics. It was found unsatisfactory in two of the nine areas analyzed under physical characteristics. These two areas were the length of the lines which was 94 millimeters and longer than standard, and the soft-back cover.
2. This skill-text was satisfactory in its overall organizational structure. Its one unsatisfactory area was the unavailability of answer keys which might cause some difficulty in large-scale, immediate scoring of work.
3. This skill-text covered 25 subject areas. This large variety of subject areas should be quite adequate in meeting the large number of reading interest encountered in reading laboratory situations.
4. The readability level of this skill-text was 9th through the 10th grade level. This skill-text should meet the needs of students in the correctional reading program at Morris Brown College.
5. The predominant approach used in this skill-text was the indirect approach which is the preferred approach.

Conclusions

The conclusions reached from the findings of this study are listed below:

1. Generally, the physical characteristics of most of the skill-texts selected for this study were satisfactory; therefore, according to stated criteria, they would be good, in terms of physical characteristics, in meeting the requirements for reading laboratories and reading classes.

2. The overall organizational structure of most of the skill-texts analyzed in this study was satisfactory; therefore, these skill-texts should contribute toward more meaningful reading and greater learning on the part of the students as well as contribute toward the reading goals and independent functioning of the reading laboratory at Morris Brown College.
3. Generally, there was a large variety of topics covered in the reading skill-texts; therefore, it can be concluded that these skill-texts will serve as a valuable aid in meeting the wide range of reading interests and reading background encountered in the reading laboratory and the reading class settings at Morris Brown College.
4. Taken collectively, the readability levels of the eleven reading skill-texts ranged from below grade four to grade twelve as determined by the Dale-Chall readability formula; therefore, these skill-texts are adequate in meeting the reading difficulty demands of participants in a remedial, correctional, or developmental college reading program.
5. The majority of the skill-texts used a greater percentage of indirect questions rather than direct questions; therefore, these skill-texts should serve as valuable aids for developing the students' independence in learning.

#### Implications of the Study

The findings of the study imply that generally, the materials being used in the reading program at Morris Brown College are of such quality that they should make contributions to the over-all development and/or improvement of reading comprehension in the correctional and the developmental reading program. There appears to be a need to secure additional higher level materials that truly meet the needs, in terms of difficulty, of the student in the

developmental reading program as only one skill-text of the eleven analyzed was written within the developmental difficulty range.

Further, it might be implied that based on the small sample in this study, the publishers are producing reading materials that meet the general demands of educators and other persons interested in reading. However, there seems to be a lack of reading materials, in terms of reading difficulty, to meet the needs or truly challenge the more sophisticated readers that educators are encouraging to participate in reading programs.

#### Recommendations

The recommendations of this study based on the findings, conclusions, and implications herein are:

1. That Morris Brown College continue to use the materials selected for this study in the correctional and the developmental reading program.
2. That Morris Brown College secure additional materials for the developmental reading program.
3. That an additional study be done using these skill-texts to determine the difficulty of the comprehension questions in relations to the comprehension selections, thus permitting a truer estimate of the reading difficulty of the reading skill-texts.
4. That an additional study be done to determine the quantity of higher level materials designed for reading programs.

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